



LIBRARY COMMISSION DRAFT MINUTES

Date: February 26, 2024

Recording: https://oakland.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?publish_id=f2afadf0-d768-11ee-98bb-0050569183fa

Location: Main Library, 125 14th Street, Oakland CA 94612

CALL TO ORDER: Co-Chair Mary Forte called the meeting to order at 5:49 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: 9

Chiye Azuma, Vice-Chair
Bradley Boyd
Brittany Buckmire
Alternier Cook
Mary Forte, Co-Chair
Carolyn Moskovitz
Gabrielle Sloane Law, Co-Chair
Caleb Smith
Cristina Tostado

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: 3

Karen Roye
Alex Weinberg
Karen Zukor

STAFF PRESENT: 2

Jamie Turbak, OPL Director
Kere Gonzales, Executive Assistant to the Director

1. Roll Call

2. What Are Commissioners Reading?

Co-Chair Mary Forte re-introduced the idea of having an icebreaker at the start of each meeting as had been the practice at commission meetings several years ago. The icebreaker would consist of sharing new book releases and also commissioners sharing books that they are currently reading. As part of the discussion, the following titles were suggested for reading:

- What do Brothas do All Day?- by Ajuan Mance
- What Alice Forgot- by Liane Moriarty
- 100 Things to do in Oakland Before You Die- by Jessie Fetterling
- The Library Book- by Susan Orleans

The idea of restarting the icebreaker was well received and will be added to the agenda as a standing item.

3. Open Forum/Public Comment

There was public comment from speaker Keno G; she stated that she was glad to be present and had no other comments.

4. Approval of Draft Minutes: January 29, 2024

Commissioner Caleb Smith made a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Chiye Azuma seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion approved.

5. Proposed Talking Points for Electeds

Commissioner Caleb Smith introduced proposed talking points that he'd drafted due to the Community Outreach committee meeting being cancelled due to lack of quorum. He described the approach to meetings with electeds as a three-pronged discussion: The first discussion point is a description of what the library is doing well and how it adds value to the community; the second discussion point is a description of what the library has been up to and what we anticipate for the year ahead; the third discussion point is the priority of the elected official whether in general or for the library.

In addition to the published talking points, the following points were suggested:

- Highlight how libraries serve as a place for personal transformation.
- Highlight that libraries are a community asset and community destination.
- Highlight the literacy program.
- Highlight the branches and programming in the elected's district
- Highlight the Spring Mixer
- Include an ask that supports something that the director wants pushed through.

It was also suggested that commissioners reach out to electeds quickly to schedule meetings before budget season is in full swing because calendars will fill up fast.

Commissioners Brittany Buckmire and Caleb Smith will work on integrating the discussed talking points into a single source and will forward it to Co-chairs for review and publishing. It was decided that this will come back to the March meeting as an action item.

6. 2024 Action Plan Updates

Co-Chair Mary Forte reminded the commission that the Action Plan was to be worked on by committees when they met. She asked Commissioner Brad Boyd to summarize the action taken at the Sustainability Committee. He shared the following:

- The Action Plan needs to be updated to the current circumstances.
- Once updated to current circumstances, the plan will drive the talking points.
- The responsibilities should be tied in with the Director's goals.
- The Action Plan should be a public document.
- Sustainability will devote their whole next meeting to updating the plan.
- Co-Chair Mary Forte added that the committee is awaiting information from the Racial Equity Team presentation in March.

7. Annual Report to Life Enrichment Committee

Co-Chair Mary Forte gave an overview of the purpose of the Life Enrichment Committee report, talked about suggestions for this year's report, and shared a copy of last year's report.

Suggestions were made to include the following in this year's report:

- Feasibility Studies
- Audit Results
- Main Library Closure
- Commission name change
- Ad Hoc Committees
- Quarterly Maintenance Report
- Past five-years of data to show the trends from pre-COVID to current.
- Virtual Usage/Libby App
- Capital Improvements
- Grants received by OPL and how they are being used

Commissioner Caleb Smith reminded the commission that an oral report is given at Life Enrichment Committee and the time allotment was five minutes last year.

8. Commissioner Assignment Update

The following changes were made to the commissioner assignments:

- Commissioner Cristina Tostado now resides in District 3.
- Commissioner Chiya Azuma no longer has 81st Ave or CM Reid.
- Commissioner Brittany Buckmire has added CM Fife.
- Commissioner Gabrielle Sloane Law now has Brookfield, 81st, CM Reid and will be assigned to Community Engagement Committee.
- Commissioner Mary Forte no longer has CM Reid and will be assigned CM Gallo.
- Lakeview, Temescal, Tool Lending and Main are unassigned.
- Piedmont and Montclair will need to be reassigned when Commissioner Caleb leaves the commission after the March meeting.

Co-Chair Mary Forte asked that the commissioner assignment listing be added as a standing document for distribution at each meeting.

9. Spring Mixer

Commissioner Caleb Smith shared that the Spring Mixer will happen on Sunday, April 14th from 1p-3p at the Main Library in the auditorium and patio. He also asked for a volunteer to be a co-Master of Ceremony along with a member of the OPL Advocates.

Commissioner Alternier Cook will coordinate the food and will circulate a sign up at the March meeting. Commissioner Cristina Tostado suggested and will coordinate a photo booth with a “Wild Things” theme.

10. Director’s Update

Director Jamie Turbak covered the following:

- **Black Joy Parade**

Oakland Public Library joined a huge crowd yesterday for a wonderful celebration at the Black Joy Parade. OPL distributed books and talked to 500 people at the booth.

- **Budget**

The General Purpose Fund is facing a shortfall in the FY 2024-25 Midcycle budget of approximately \$115,000,000. There are also deficits totaling over \$45,00,000 across several non GPF Funds. Departments are being asked to carefully review their services and programs given the reality of limited ongoing resources. The Library Department Final Budget Proposal is due March 19, 2024

- **OPL’s First Library Safety Manager**

Thanita Adams joined OPL on February 20 as OPL's first Library Safety Manager. As part of the Library Management Team, Thanita will support and advise on incident response, collaborate with other city departments and partners, work on training for our contract security, and more. This is a new role for OPL and will evolve in support of building a culture of safety at OPL. Thanita brings well over a decade of experience in clinical and forensic social work and non-profit program management in the Bay Area, with a focus on reducing the impacts of chronic homelessness, serious mental illness and ongoing involvement in the justice system through improved access to services, coordinated crisis response and targeted staff training. She worked with organizations such as Fred Finch Youth Center, San Quentin State Prison, CA Department of State Hospitals Conditional Release Program (CONREP), Swords to Plowshares and St. Anthony’s Foundation before joining the City of Oakland.

11. Co-Chairperson’s Update

Co-Chair Mary Forte shared that there are seven applicants for the commission and four current vacancies. Interviews will take place on Monday, March 4th and Wednesday, March 6th. March will be a busy month for Co-Chairs with interviews and drafting the Life Enrichment Committee memo.

12. Standing Committee Updates

Sustainability Committee

Commissioner Brad Boyd reported that he’d accepted the role of Chair of the committee. He also reported that the committee went through the questions on the survey in detail and will meet with Director Turbak to discuss the survey and talk about mechanisms for delivery and available resources.

Commissioner Mary Forte reported that Commissioner Alex Weinstein will assume the responsibility of receiving and distributing the quarterly maintenance report.

Community Engagement Committee-

Did not meet due to lack of quorum and has not met since April 2023. Will agendize the committee meeting date/time on the March full commission meeting and will elect a Chair at the next meeting.

13. Ad-Hoc Committee Updates

Bylaws- Will have a meeting in late March with Director Turbak to discuss City Attorney feedback.

Censorship- This ad hoc committee has dissolved and will not be on future agendas.

Survey- Commissioner Mary Forte has been replaced by Commissioner Brad Boyd in ad hoc group. Will meet with Director Turbak to discuss next steps.

14. Commissioner Advocacy Updates

Commissioner Alternier Cook reported that she had emailed Co-Chair Mary Forte and Director Turbak a report from the Branch Manager at West Oakland which contained a list of outstanding maintenance items that have needed attention for quite a long time. Director Turbak stated that she shared the details of the outstanding maintenance items with Diane Tannenwald, Project Manager. Co-chair Mary Forte asked that West Oakland Branch remain on agenda as a standing item with a monthly update of items that have been resolved.

Commissioner Chiye Azuma shared that she is working on forming a Friends group at MLK Jr Branch.

Commissioner Alternier Cook shared that she was asked to speak at the St. Mary’s Senior City Black History event. She talked about the library and the importance of seniors being present and participating at the library.

Commissioner Mary Forte reported that the Elmhurst library backyard has a gazebo and solar powered lights. They also have two little red hens. The backyard is just beautiful, and Elmhurst is very proud.

15. Agenda Building

- **March 2024-** Racial Equity Team, Finalize Annual Report, Finalize Talking Points, Community Engagement Meeting, West Oakland Update.
- **April 2024-** Budget Overview, Budget 101, Audit Findings/Report, Meetings During Closure, Quarterly Maintenance Report.
- **May 2024-** Survey from Sustainability Committee, Facilities Project Manager Update, Spring Mixer.
- **June 2024-**
- **Summer 2024-** Safety Manager, Feasibility Presentation by Consultant

16. Adjournment - Meeting adjourned at 7:58 PM

Respectfully submitted,

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Kere Gonzales, Executive Assistant